News from the Wyoming Department of Health

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New CPR Guidelines May Help Save Wyoming Lives

New guidelines for cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) should help save Wyoming lives by saving precious time in certain health emergency situations, according to a Wyoming Department of Health representative.

The American Heart Association (AHA) has conducted numerous studies showing that when CPR is begun immediately in a cardiac arrest, the patient's chances of survival increase dramatically.

"Quick action on the spot can be especially important in a state like Wyoming because of the distances between our communities," said Andy Gienapp, Office of Emergency Medical Services administrator with the Wyoming Department of Health. "In many cases, a hospital or doctor's help may be a number of miles away."

The AHA recently released its "2010 Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Emergency Cardiovascular Care (ECC)" to include major revisions. Changes include:

- •The new sequence for beginning CPR is **C-A-B** (Compressions, Airway, Breathing) rather than the traditional A-B-C (Airway, Breathing, Circulation) that was taught for many years.
- •The sequence of "Look, Listen, and Feel" was removed. Under the new guidelines, lay rescuers are taught to initiate CPR if the patient is "not breathing or only gasping."
- ·Compressions are now to be done at a rate of at *least* 100 per minute.
- ·For the adult victim, the AHA has eliminated the suggested 1 ½ to 2 inches range for depth of compressions 0 to at *least* 2 inches to eliminate confusion.
- ·The use of a standard Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) in children less than one year of age is approved if a pediatric AED is not available.

Gienapp said studies have shown that lay rescuers have difficulty opening the airway and giving rescue breaths. "The new emphasis on compressions should encourage bystanders to begin CPR, which means critical help more quickly for patients experiencing a heart attack or full cardiac arrest."

"The underlying idea behind the updated recommendations is that 'compressions only' CPR is better than none," Gienapp said.

Emergency medical personnel in Wyoming will be on the front lines of both using and educating residents about the new guidelines. Wyoming emergency medical technicians, paramedics and

ambulance service personnel are required to perform according to current AHA standards and many also serve as CPR instructors within their local communities.

The Wyoming Office of Emergency Medical Services endorses the new guidelines and will support ambulance services and other organizations around the state as they are implemented.

For more information on the new AHA guidelines, visit http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG online. More information about the Wyoming Department of Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services can be found online at http://www.health.wyo.gov/sho/ems/index.html.